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The Victory of the Farmers of Ontario

(Continued from page 4)

body of men from the start. E. C. Drury was first chosen president of the United Farmers of Ontario, but became vice president shortly afterward, and has held that office ever since. Now he has been made premier of Ontario by a unanimous vote of the members, though not yet elected to the house. His choice will be ratified by the annual U. F. O. convention next month, as the institution has always been developed along democratic lines, and no "caucus rule" is permitted or attempted.

President R. H. Halbert has taken a leading part in the fight. He is a witty Irishman, farmer, Methodist, Orangeman and former Tory. This is a strong combination in Ontario, and has gone a long way to help meet the cries of enemies that it is a "Grit" dodge or a Roman Catholic affair. (The old, old game!) Since becoming president (and he has been returned each year for five years) Halbert has become a remarkably able platform speaker, especially effective before rural audiences, whom he can sway at his will.

President R. W. E. Burnaby of the co-operative company is a successful business man, who "reformed" and is now working a large and valuable farm for a living, on the outskirts of Toronto. He is a wealthy man with the peculiar gift of insight into and sympathy for the problems of the poor man struggling along to make a living out of his acres. Halbert is a candidate for the house of commons, now in the midst of his by-election, and Burnaby is freely spoken of as a prospective member from his county.

Colonel John Z. Fraser was another of the leaders from the start. He has been an influential Conservative all his life, and a military man. As president of the publishing company that owns the Farmers' Sun, he has done good work for the movement, and at present represents the U. F. O. on the Canadian wheat board, where the two farmers are hopelessly outnumbered by members of the grain and milling trade.

A year ago the United Farm Women of Ontario were opportunely formed, for during the past year the ballot was extended to the women of the province, and the U. F. O. was already in line with an open door to the women of the farms. The writer recalls with considerable pride that he—a mere man—had the privilege of nominating the first president and secretary of the U. F. W. O. at their organization meeting, where only two other men were present; and the secretary was Miss Griesbach, the women's editor of the Weekly Sun, at that time the self-appointed official organ of the movement.

WOMEN ACTIVE IN BATTLE OF FARMERS

Mrs. George A. Brodie, a leading Women's Institute worker, was chosen president, and during the past year carried on an aggressive campaign more particularly for the farm women, in aid of the farmers' cause. But the most outstanding woman campaigner was Mrs. H. L. Laws, a school teacher and farmer's wife, who was forced to give up her school when the U. F. O. campaign demanded all her spare time—and paid her less, to its shame, than she had received as school teacher. This same story of personal sacrifice runs through the activities of all those connected with the movement in any way. And how could it be otherwise, with a 50-cent yearly membership fee, which was raised a year ago to $1, but which should be $5 at the very least?

The women's organization has not attained the prominence of the U. F. O. itself, but the women of Ontario on their first ballot showed that they were ready to stand behind the men to the last ditch in a public duty.

The farmers' platform was an attractive affair. In the first place, it demanded a less reckless expenditure of the public funds.

In support of the U. F. O.'s bluntly put demand to "Cut out all unnecessary expenditure," figures were produced showing that the provincial expenditure had gone up sensationally in recent years, as indicated by the following table:

1895	$3,758,595
1900	4,003,729
1904	5,267,453
1913	10,868,026
1918	24,334,000

Other figures were presented, showing how the government had been raising the cost of doing its own work, its own salaries, and its departmental costs. All of these things were ignored by the party press, apparently for the reason that it is tacitly understood that these things go along with party politics, where the government is controlled by certain underhand, or unseen interests, and not by the people.

CABINET MEMBER QUITS FOR OIL FIRM JOB

It was considered significant by many that a leading member of the cabinet should resign, and take on an important office with the Imperial Oil company, whose solicitor he had been while a member of the government, and should die a short time later worth over a million, although there has never been a whisper that he definitely "sold" his province for any money. It was said, however, on one case that no matter which of the old parties went back, the Imperial Oil company would have the ear of the government.

In one riding it was openly charged—and names were mentioned—that both Liberal and Conservative candidates at a previous election had been given $20,000 each for their election expenses by an agent of Mackenzie & Mann, our great railway builders—and wreckers—and that the man who spent all his lot won out over the man who saved $5,000 of it for himself.

These things showed up in black relief against the clean campaign of the U. F. O., who had no campaign funds, had no big interests backing them, and quietly received the calumnies of a united press. Personalities were not indulged in and the fight was on a high ground, so far as the U. F. O. was concerned, though several attempts to bring in scandals against the U. F. O. men were made.

In one riding the total election expenses of the U. F. O. candidate, who was elected by a large majority, would not exceed $50 or $75. No outside speakers were called in, few posters were printed, and only a few ads were put in the local papers. The rest was done by the rank and file of the membership, who got out and worked for their man in a marvelous way.

Briefly, the other points touched on by the farmers' provincial platform included: Abolition of party patronage; co-operative legislation; equal education for all; a sane policy of road maintenance and building; reforestation; hydro-electric development; temperance legislation; direct legislation, and proportional representation.

This is the program shouldered by Premier Drury and his colleagues, to which the Labor members have acquiesced, struggling a bit to swallow the temperance clause, but doing it manfully.

And so the United Farmers of Ontario stand on the threshold of a new experience. They are absolutely untried in legislative matters, only two having sat in the house for one session (as U. F. O. members), but the public in general has adopted a very fair,

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